



General Assembly

February Session, 2008

***Raised Bill No. 5871***

LCO No. 2724

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Referred to Committee on Education

Introduced by:  
(ED)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEST PROGRAM.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 10-220a of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
3 *1, 2008*):

4 (d) (1) The Department of Education may fund, within available  
5 appropriations, in cooperation with one or more regional educational  
6 service centers: [(1)] (A) A cooperating teacher program to train  
7 Connecticut public school teachers and certified teachers at private  
8 special education facilities approved by the Commissioner of  
9 Education and at other facilities designated by the commissioner, who  
10 participate in the supervision, training and evaluation of student  
11 teachers; [(2)] (B) institutes to provide continuing education for  
12 Connecticut public school educators, assessors and cooperating  
13 teachers and teacher mentors, including institutes to provide  
14 continuing education for Connecticut public school educators offered  
15 in cooperation with the Connecticut Humanities Council; and [(3)] (C)  
16 a beginning teacher support and assessment program to train  
17 Connecticut public school teachers and other qualified persons

18 approved by the Commissioner of Education and certified teachers at  
19 such private special education and other designated facilities who  
20 serve as mentors or assessors for beginning teachers and who  
21 supervise, train and assist or assess beginning teachers in their initial  
22 years in teaching and to pay stipends to assessors. Funds available  
23 under this subsection shall be paid directly to school districts for the  
24 provision of substitute teachers when cooperating teachers, teacher  
25 mentors, beginning teachers and assessors are released from regular  
26 classroom responsibilities and for the provision of professional  
27 development activities for cooperating and student teachers, teacher  
28 mentors, assessors and beginning teachers. The cooperating teacher  
29 and beginning teacher support and assessment programs shall operate  
30 in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Board of  
31 Education in accordance with chapter 54, except in cases of placement  
32 in other countries pursuant to written cooperative agreements between  
33 Connecticut institutions of higher education and institutions of higher  
34 education in other countries. A Connecticut institution may enter such  
35 an agreement only if the State Board of Education and Board of  
36 Governors for Higher Education have jointly approved the institution's  
37 teacher preparation program to enter into such agreements. Student  
38 teachers shall be placed with trained cooperating teachers. Beginning  
39 teachers shall participate in a beginning teacher support and  
40 assessment program as made available by the board. School districts  
41 shall be responsible for providing support to beginning teachers which  
42 shall include, but not be limited to, the placement of beginning  
43 teachers with trained teacher mentors who may be full or part-time  
44 teachers in the same or a different building than the beginning teacher  
45 and provision of trained assessors to conduct assessments of beginning  
46 teachers. Cooperating teachers, teacher mentors and assessors may  
47 serve concurrently in more than one capacity and may be assigned  
48 more than one student teacher or beginning teacher in each such  
49 capacity. The assessment of each beginning teacher shall be based  
50 upon, but not limited to, data obtained from observations conducted  
51 by assessors using an assessment instrument. A beginning teacher

52 shall be assessed by educators with teaching experience in the same  
 53 general subject area as such beginning teacher. Cooperating teachers  
 54 and teacher mentors who are Connecticut public school teachers and  
 55 assessors who are employed by school districts shall be selected by  
 56 local and regional boards of education. Cooperating teachers and  
 57 teacher mentors and assessors at such private special education and  
 58 other designated facilities shall be selected by the authority responsible  
 59 for the operation of such facilities. If a board of education is unable to  
 60 identify a sufficient number of individuals to serve in such positions,  
 61 the commissioner may select qualified persons who are not employed  
 62 by the board of education to serve in such positions. Such regulations  
 63 shall require primary consideration of teachers' classroom experience  
 64 and recognized success as educators. The provisions of sections 10-  
 65 153a to 10-153n, inclusive, shall not be applicable to the selection [,]  
 66 and placement [and compensation] of persons participating in the  
 67 cooperating teacher and beginning teacher support and assessment  
 68 programs pursuant to the provisions of this section, except that on and  
 69 after July 1, 2009, the provisions of sections 10-153a to 10-153n,  
 70 inclusive, shall be applicable to the compensation and to the hours and  
 71 duties of such persons. The State Board of Education shall protect and  
 72 save harmless, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-235, any  
 73 cooperating teacher, teacher mentor or assessor while serving in such  
 74 capacity.

75 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this  
 76 subsection or any other provisions of this title concerning the  
 77 beginning teacher support and assessment program, the beginning  
 78 teacher support and assessment program shall be suspended for the  
 79 2008-2009 school year.

80 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 10-153d of the general statutes is  
 81 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
 82 *1, 2008*):

83 (b) The local or regional board of education and the organization

84 designated or elected as the exclusive representative for the  
85 appropriate unit, through designated officials or their representatives,  
86 shall have the duty to negotiate with respect to salaries, hours and  
87 other conditions of employment about which either party wishes to  
88 negotiate. On and after July 1, 2009, the parties shall negotiate with  
89 respect to the compensation of cooperating teachers and teacher  
90 mentors and assessors participating in the cooperating teacher and  
91 beginning teacher support and assessment programs pursuant to the  
92 provisions of section 10-220a, as amended by this act, and to the hours  
93 and duties of such persons. For purposes of this subsection and  
94 sections 10-153a, 10-153b and 10-153e to 10-153g, inclusive, (1) "hours"  
95 shall not include the length of the student school year, the scheduling  
96 of the student school year, the length of the student school day, the  
97 length and number of parent-teacher conferences and the scheduling  
98 of the student school day, except for the length and the scheduling of  
99 teacher lunch periods and teacher preparation periods, and (2) "other  
100 conditions of employment" shall not include the establishment or  
101 provisions of any retirement incentive plan authorized by section 10-  
102 183jj of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes. Such negotiations  
103 shall commence not less than two hundred ten days prior to the  
104 budget submission date. Any local board of education shall file  
105 forthwith a signed copy of any contract with the town clerk and with  
106 the Commissioner of Education. Any regional board of education shall  
107 file forthwith a signed copy of any such contract with the town clerk in  
108 each member town and with the Commissioner of Education. Upon  
109 receipt of a signed copy of such contract the clerk of such town shall  
110 give public notice of such filing. The terms of such contract shall be  
111 binding on the legislative body of the local or regional school district,  
112 unless such body rejects such contract at a regular or special meeting  
113 called and convened for such purpose within thirty days of the filing  
114 of the contract. If a vote on such contract is petitioned for in accordance  
115 with the provisions of section 7-7, in order to reject such contract, a  
116 minimum number of those persons eligible to vote equal to fifteen per  
117 cent of the electors of such local or regional school district shall be

118 required to participate in the voting and a majority of those voting  
119 shall be required to reject. Any regional board of education shall call a  
120 district meeting to consider such contract within such thirty-day  
121 period if the chief executive officer of any member town so requests in  
122 writing within fifteen days of the receipt of the signed copy of the  
123 contract by the town clerk in such town. The body charged with  
124 making annual appropriations in any school district shall appropriate  
125 to the board of education whatever funds are required to implement  
126 the terms of any contract not rejected pursuant to this section. All  
127 organizations seeking to represent members of the teaching profession  
128 shall be accorded equal treatment with respect to access to teachers,  
129 principals, members of the board of education, records, mail boxes and  
130 school facilities and, in the absence of any recognition or certification  
131 as the exclusive representative as provided by section 10-153b,  
132 participation in discussions with respect to salaries, hours and other  
133 conditions of employment.

134       Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to  
135 develop a plan to replace the beginning educator support and training  
136 program with a mentor assistance program. The plan shall include, but  
137 not be limited to, the following: (1) Requirements for an initial  
138 educator's successful completion of the mentor assistance program, (2)  
139 sequence support modules based on state standards as set forth in the  
140 Common Core of Teaching, as developed by the Department of  
141 Education, (3) requirements concerning (A) mentor eligibility and  
142 assignments and training of mentors, and (B) the frequency with  
143 which mentor teachers should meet with beginning teachers, (4)  
144 methods to encourage collaboration from the Department of  
145 Education, Regional Educational Service Centers and local and  
146 regional school districts to identify, recruit and retain mentors, and (5)  
147 recommendations concerning the development of a data collection and  
148 evaluation system for monitoring the mentor assistance program on  
149 local and state-wide levels. The task force should consider whether  
150 legislative changes should be made, including, but not limited to,  
151 amending section 10-220a of the general statutes to (A) require a

152 reduced classroom teaching work load for mentors, as determined by  
153 the school district, (B) expand the categories of persons who can  
154 become mentors, (C) require that beginning teachers receive and  
155 complete the mentor assistance program during their first two years of  
156 certification, and (D) require that school districts receive full funding  
157 to implement the mentor assistance program.

158 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

159 (1) The chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing  
160 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
161 relating to education;

162 (2) The chairpersons and ranking members of the Legislative  
163 Program Review and Investigations Committee;

164 (3) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives  
165 who shall be a member of the Connecticut Education Association;

166 (4) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate who  
167 shall be a member of the Connecticut chapter of the American  
168 Federation of Teachers;

169 (5) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
170 Representatives who shall be a member of the Connecticut Association  
171 of Boards of Education;

172 (6) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate who shall be  
173 a member of the Connecticut Association of Public School  
174 Superintendents;

175 (7) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
176 Representatives who shall be a member of the Connecticut Association  
177 of Schools;

178 (8) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate who shall be  
179 a member of the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators; and

180 (9) One person appointed by the Governor who shall be a member  
181 of the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association.

182 (c) All appointments to the task force shall be made no later than  
183 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be  
184 filled by the appointing authority.

185 (d) The chairpersons of the task force shall be the chairpersons of  
186 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
187 cognizance of matters relating to education. Such chairpersons shall  
188 schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held no later  
189 than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

190 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the  
191 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education  
192 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

193 (f) Not later than January 1, 2009, the task force shall report, in  
194 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,  
195 its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of  
196 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
197 education and to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations  
198 Committee. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits  
199 such report or January 1, 2009, whichever is earlier.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	10-220a(d)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	10-153d(b)
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section

***Statement of Purpose:***

To require school boards and unions to bargain over the compensation, hours and duties of teachers who train and evaluate student teachers or serve as mentors and assessors of beginning teachers under the beginning educator support and training program (BEST), suspend the BEST program for the fiscal year ending June 30,

2009, and to create a task force to develop a plan to replace the BEST program with a mentor assistance program.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*